

U.S. Department of Education
2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) ☐ Elementary ☐ Middle ☒ High ☐ K-12 ☐ Other
☐ Charter ☐ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Mrs. Eleanor Matthews

Official School Name: Western High School

School Mailing Address:
4600 Falls Road
Baltimore, MD 21209-4915

County: Baltimore City State School Code Number*: 0407

Telephone: (410) 396-7040 Fax: (410) 396-7492

Web site/URL: http://westernhighschool.org E-mail: epmatthews@bcps.k12.md.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Andres Alonso

District Name: Baltimore City Tel: (410) 396-8803

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Brian Morris

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:	<u>76</u>	Elementary schools
	<u>24</u>	Middle schools
	<u>0</u>	Junior high schools
	<u>37</u>	High schools
	<u>58</u>	Other
	<u>195</u>	TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 12542

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 11398

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☒ Urban or large central city
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
☐ Suburban
☐ Small city or town in a rural area
☐ Rural

4. 3 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

8 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	7			0
K			0	8			0
1			0	9	0	224	224
2			0	10	0	236	236
3			0	11	0	198	198
4			0	12	0	189	189
5			0	Other			0
6			0				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							847

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 52 %

Total number students who qualify: 443

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

Data is for 2008-09.

10. Students receiving special education services: 1 %

Total Number of Students Served: 5

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>40</u>	<u>5</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
Total number	<u>55</u>	<u>12</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	95%	94%	94%	94%	94%
Daily teacher attendance	94%	95%	94%	96%	95%
Teacher turnover rate	13%	16%	14%	18%	11%
Student dropout rate	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

- Western's attendance rate, between 94 and 95% every year since 1999–2000, compares favorably with a district-wide high school rate that reached a high of 84% last year. Many Western students commute to school from distant areas of the city and, relying on public transit, encounter difficulty reaching school in severely inclement weather, when City schools often remain open while surrounding districts close.
- Over these years seventeen teachers retired. The 18% rate of 2004–05 largely results from staffing cuts imposed by Baltimore City Public Schools that year.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	172	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	90	%
Enrolled in a community college	3	%
Enrolled in vocational training	1	%
Found employment	3	%
Military service	1	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	2	%
Unknown		%
Total	100	%

PART III - SUMMARY

In January 1844 Baltimore's School Board declared that a "higher grade of school" was "very much required" for females and Western High School came into being. Now, 165 years later, Western continues to serve the young women of the Baltimore area, providing what the 1865 School Board deemed the "higher branches" of study. Now as then, the school's motto *Lucem accepimus, lucem demus* ("We have received light, let us give forther light") has lighted the way of students and staff. Western prepares her graduates for the challenges that await them, no matter their background or status.

Western welcomes girls with varying levels of skill development and ensures their college readiness by commencement. For years 100% of Western seniors have graduated with college acceptances in hand; since 2006, every graduate has been accepted into a 4-year college or university. Graduates have always received a bounty of scholarships and grants. In 2008, graduates received \$4,000,000 in scholarships; two seniors were awarded early admission and full tuition to Johns Hopkins University. A College Bound study reported that Western has the highest percentage of Baltimore City School students who go on to attend college.

A recipient of the *U.S. News & World Report* Bronze Medal two years running and fully accredited, Western has met AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress, Maryland's school performance standard) since its inception and currently has the highest percentage of Baltimore City Schools students who have met the State's HSA (High School Assessment) requirements for graduation. The school's college preparatory program continues to develop in response to the needs of its students, who come from every one of Baltimore's diverse communities. Minority groups make up 89% of Western's student body, and more than half of Western's students live at or below the poverty level. All members of the school community work together to make certain that, even with limited resources, the students receive the best possible instruction and co-curricular experiences. All students are encouraged to take on the challenge and experience of advanced studies; enrollment in AP classes has increased steadily in the past five years.

Western students excel beyond the classroom. The FRC FIRST Robotics Team won numerous trophies for excellence and was featured in a PBS documentary on high school robotics. Last year they competed in VEX International Competition in California; this year they travel to Dallas. Last year five students won medals at the Maryland Spoken Russian Olympiad and three gold or silver medals in the National Russian Essay Contest. Five students earned prizes in the Morgan State University Science Fair and competed at national and international competitions in Atlanta and Houston. Western students earn Urban Debate League trophies, athletic and dance competition awards, are finalists in the "Champions of Courage" essay contest, and one student is representing the City at the state-level Poetry Out Loud competition.

Western partners with a range of institutions. The University of Maryland School of Mental Health provides supplemental student support services, while the University of Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, Morgan State, and Towson Universities offer academic support services. Western received grants from NASA, Eagle Alliance, and Northrop-Grumman to support its STEM program, which includes a college credit technology class. Private high schools also are partners. Students traveled on last year's Civil Rights Journey with the Cardin School, and a young women's leadership program with St. Paul's School for Girls is in its fourth year.

With highly qualified staff working in vertical and grade-level teams to ensure rigor and best practices; with students accepting the challenges of the classroom and over 40 clubs, organizations, and teams; with parents and guardians participating in PTA, Parent Nights, and a Parent Networking and Support Group; with alumnae providing mentoring, Western continues to fulfill its role as a "higher grade of school" for women. The Home of the Doves is indeed that—a family environment that fosters the growth and development of young girls into intelligent, independent, and involved women.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Maryland's school accountability system rests on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). For high schools, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) testing component of AYP currently consists of the High School Assessment (HSA) English and HSA Algebra/Data Analysis. HSAs are also required in biology and government. The HSAs are end-of-course tests that students take as they complete the appropriate high school level course. All students must take the High School Assessment after completing the appropriate course. The Maryland State Board of Education has set passing scale scores for all four of the content areas. All graduates (beginning with the class of 2009) must now meet the HSA requirement, usually by passing the HSA in each of four subjects. A combined score of 1602 also satisfies the HSA requirement.

The state's AYP report does not distinguish between proficient and advanced performance on the assessments. The end-of-course tests document proficiency at the required level in the subject, rather than progress towards general mathematics or reading proficiency. For school year 2003-04, Maryland's NCLB English test was the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) English: Grade 10 Reading. For school years 2003-04 and 2004-05, the NCLB mathematics test was the Maryland School Assessment: Geometry. We report the results for these tests for the indicated years.

English proficiency for Western increased significantly from 2004 to 2008, rising from 76% to 99%. Last year all but two students achieved proficiency. Mathematics proficiency also rose to 99% in 2008, the culmination of an even more dramatic trend upwards from 2004, when only 38% were proficient. Only one student did not achieve mathematics proficiency last year.

In English one finds few consistent statistical differences in proficiency among Western's racial/ethnic and socioeconomic subgroups. The percentage of HSA English takers eligible for free/reduced meals (FARM) rose from 36% in 2004 to roughly 50% each year since 2006; this subgroup's English proficiency remained close to that of all takers, some years slightly higher or lower. A small minority at Western, white students achieved scores close to those of all students, too. The English performance of African-Americans is significant. This group constituted 80% of test takers in 2004, a percentage that rose to 90% in 2008; the overall rise in proficiency can be attributed largely to its performance. Indeed, African-American students have scored roughly the same as our only other statistically significant racial/ethnic subgroup, whites: some years lower, some higher, but the differences seem negligible given the relatively small number of white test takers.

In mathematics, too, Western's subgroups vary little from the general population in proficiency. The greatest difference in proficiency—only a 4% gap—between FARM students and all students occurred in 2004. One sees a larger variance between the performance of African-American and white students. In 2004 the proficiency of white students was 24 points higher than that of African-Americans, but that gap narrowed to 12 the next year, and in 2006, African-Americans outperformed whites by 6 percentage points. In 2007, whites again showed proficiency 10 points above that of African-Americans. Only in this year did proficiency rates dip: they dipped for all subgroups and for all test-takers. All other years show an increase for each subgroup and for all takers.

Neither Baltimore City Schools nor the state enjoyed comparable success. Baltimore's reading and math proficiency, both 65% in 2008, are far lower, as are state rates: 82% in English, 84% in math. District-wide, Baltimore's African-American students significantly underperformed (a 21% difference) whites in both English and mathematics. Statewide the gap yawned wider, by 30 percentage points in English and 24 in mathematics. In Baltimore City, FARM students scored only 2 points lower than all students, but statewide

FARM students' English proficiency lagged 14 points below that of all takers. Statewide, FARM students demonstrated mathematics proficiency last year at a rate 12 points below that of all takers.

The most significant fact in our HSA data, however, is that all but 1 of our students achieved proficiency in mathematics and all but 2 in English last year. This caps a rising trend of five years and represents an extraordinary achievement of our students. No discussion of subgroup performance makes sense when all but one or two students demonstrate proficiency: the rate for all subgroups is statistically identical.

Maryland publishes testing information and data at <http://mdreportcard.org>, <http://mdk12.org>, and <http://marylandpublicschools.org>.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Western's staff incorporates review of assessment data to address the needs of students as they develop the skills required for college readiness. This practice has helped our student body become more successful (as measured by increasing state assessment scores and AYP) over the past four to five years. Results from HSA (Maryland High School Assessments) are shared among the staff so all instructors understand how students are performing and all disciplines work together to foster skill development.

Both in and among departments, dialogue based on close examination of assessment engenders new strategies for fostering students' critical thinking, reading and writing across the curriculum. Teachers of Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Studies in particular use external data (HSA, BCPSS quarterly benchmarks, PSAT, SAT and AP exam data) as well as in-house assessments (initial diagnostics, unit tests and examinations) to pinpoint areas of concern and accommodate individual and class needs. First identifying the kind of skill measured by individual assessment items (using state-mandated voluntary curriculum standards), and then relying on data provided by testing organizations/companies, instructors work in both vertical and horizontal course teams to note the skills that need further strengthening.

Beyond the classroom, students in need of additional help can be assigned "9th Period" (special resource classes that run after the school day proper), or may be referred to teacher and/or Honor Society tutors. The school also has provided a six-week Saturday Academy to help students in need of additional coaching and has used both on-line tutorial services and appropriate software. Guidance counselors also use test results to encourage students and suggest possible remedial or enrichment measures and in guiding course selections and college applications.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Western shares student performance in many ways. Assessment and AYP data are presented—for congratulations and encouragement—to staff and students in initial meetings and assemblies. The principal informs Western stakeholders about student progress at a community meeting at the beginning of the school year, meets frequently with Western alumnae, and later presents a midyear report at SIT (School Improvement Team) and school community meetings. The Instructional Leadership Team analyzes testing results and collaborates with teaching staff so that the data guides work in the classroom.

Important information about student achievement both academically and beyond the classroom is noted in "A Dove's Eye View" (newsletter) and *The Campus Crier* (school newspaper). Information is also posted on the school and alumnae websites. The principal, guidance department, and individual teachers send out periodic letters/newsletters reporting significant data about student and school performance to parents and other stakeholders. Western's School Improvement Team, in whose membership all stakeholder groups are represented, meets monthly. Daily public address announcements and placards and signs around the building inform the school community of student achievement. Over the school year, the school sends four academic progress reports and four report cards to parents/guardians.

Additionally, more and more instructors are using the school system's on-line course (TS3, an implementation of the *Blackboard Learning System*) to communicate course work, class attendance, and grades. There are also monthly PTA meetings at which the principal shares information and developments with parents. A PTA mailbox facilitates parent communication. Western uses the Global Connect Voice Messaging system to report and share information via telephone with every student's home. Three or more evening parent-teacher conference events complement the four that occur during the school day. Western holds two open houses for prospective students, during which time pertinent information about the school's performance is shared.

4. Sharing Success:

Western has always cooperated with other institutions and will continue to do so. Western staff members often help to develop, host and/or attend professional development geared toward the improvement of classroom instruction. Most, if not all, departments cooperate with two other citywide college preparatory schools to create best practices sessions where department leaders and members discuss common concerns, demonstrate varying teaching techniques, review student work, and create common benchmarks. This past October, for example, English teachers from all three institutions shared how to use content to generate the kind of close reading and writing that helps students succeed in general, on standardized assessments (particularly AP), and in college.

Department chairs and selected staff members often present and/or lead district workshops in curricular planning and implementation and the use of best practices to foster student growth. Even our students share "what works." For example, Western students engaged in literary Socratic Circles, independently discussing technique and theme in *Antigone* and *The Scarlet Letter*, were featured at two system-wide professional development sessions for English teachers.

Additionally, Western's staff is often invited to work with beginning teachers from other City schools. Two instructors work with the Teacher Residency Program, providing valuable help to those who have selected a career in teaching. From time to time Western hosts staff from other schools who come to witness best practices in the classroom. Additionally, a number of Western instructors are called upon by administrative staff from other schools to provide mentoring in classroom management and aide in curriculum development and delivery. At least once a month, Western's administrators meet with their peers to review system concerns, discuss curricula, and share successful strategies. Western's principal has hosted numerous principal candidates, allowing them to experience a school at work. School representatives attend meetings of the National Coalition of Girls' Schools to discuss strategies geared specifically for female student learning.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Western is a women's college preparatory institution that emphasizes academic rigor and advanced studies and that designs and implements curricula to accomplish this while broadening student knowledge and strengthening critical skills. Maryland's Voluntary State Curriculum, the American Diploma Project, and the College Board's AP program guide alignment of the school's curricular offerings to local, state, and national standards. Western offers three experiences—the College Preparatory, the Accelerated Program, and the Teacher Academy—each of which requires 7 more credits than the standard Maryland diploma. Students are encouraged to take AP classes, the number of which will increase from 8 to 14 next year with plans to implement more. Instructors in every discipline engage in collaborative planning and incorporate differentiated techniques to address varying learning styles so students will succeed in higher education and the careers of their choice.

In Fine Arts courses students study history and technique in visual art, instrumental and vocal music, and dance. They can perform with the school's band, chamber or choral groups. Drama is also alive and well with a number of classes, a Drama Club, the Stage Crew, and at least two productions per year. AP Studio Art will be offered next year.

English uses a vertical team based on Pre-AP/AP models that drives decisions about how to use the best literature and non-fiction to develop young women who are strong readers, thinkers, writers, and speakers. As students move from English I through IV, they learn how to respond to a text using close reading techniques, to engage in frequent composition, and to participate in discussions like the Socratic Circle. All students are encouraged to take AP Literature and Composition or Language and Composition as capstones.

In Mathematics students must complete the required core classes in algebra, geometry, and precalculus. With college preparation in mind, the department offers additional coursework designed to expand understanding and facility: Logic, AP Calculus AB and BC, and, next year, AP Statistics. Instructors plan together to make certain all students acquire habits of inquiry, thought, and ability as foundations for real world application.

Social Studies instructors, proud of the fact that well over 95% of all students pass the American Government HSA the first time they take it, work to create knowledgeable and thoughtful citizens as students progress through the core courses of World History, American Government, and U.S. History. As with the other areas, the department offers AP courses (U.S. History, U.S. Government and Politics, and Human Geography next year) and a number of electives (Psychology, Economics, Sociology, Law) to foster the skills and knowledge base needed in both college and civic life.

Science coursework begins with the biology, chemistry, and physics core offerings and provides upper-level courses (AP Biology, AP Chemistry, and, next year, AP Physics B) and challenging electives such as Anatomy/Physiology, Genetics, and Computers in Science. While guiding students to scientific literacy, the department seeks to ignite, encourage and/or strengthen a love for science and what it can do to help humankind. Students boost their critical and analytical thinking skills as they conduct hands-on work in laboratories and other kinds of projects.

Students take four years of the same modern world language: Spanish, Chinese, or Russian. They are guided in the acquisition and polishing of vocabulary and language structure so that they will be able to communicate both orally and in writing, as well as being able to read texts in a language other than their own. Students explore the history and culture of lands where the target language is spoken.

Technology plays a vital role at Western. All students take a technology course, and teachers infuse the use of technology into all instructional areas. An on-staff certified Technology Coordinator supports students, teachers, and administrators. There are 5 computer labs available to students for class activities and individual work. One or two labs are open in the morning, at lunch times, and after school to accommodate independent student work. A variety of educational software and programs is available for teacher and student use. Technology supports the work of all disciplines as it, too, helps students attain a variety of skills and prepare for college.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

This question is for elementary schools only

2b. (Secondary Schools) English:

Western's English Program is developed by department members to ensure exposure to the best reading and writing models available, classical and contemporary. Teachers work collaboratively (vertical and grade-level teams) to design units and lessons that increase student performance while incorporating increasingly sophisticated work in language arts. While most students read at grade-level, teachers adapt materials to help students who need further skill development.

School years begin with entry diagnostics that measure comprehension, literary analysis and GUM (grammar/usage/mechanics). Students also compose essays drawing on assigned summer reading. The data then guides implementation—and any necessary adaptation—of course materials to accommodate individual and group skill development needs. Periodic benchmarks, shared unit tests and semester exams also provide data for evaluation of progress.

The department offers after-school coach classes and a computer/writing lab. In past years teachers have helped students to increase their reading and writing skills at Saturday Academies. This year, students needing additional practice in reading and writing can attend “9th period” after the school day with an English coach.

English I seeks to increase comprehension, develop analytical skills, show what, how, and why to study and how to write with organization and support. English II builds upon these, and students learn additional techniques in rhetoric and literary analysis. Sophomores practice both “academic” and real-world composition. In English III and IV students work more independently, applying and honing skills in each of the following: close reading; analytical journal response; text marking/annotation; application of literary vocabulary/concepts; word meaning in context; written commentary and essay; small and large group discussion and presentation projects (collaborative learning); research skills.

One of the most distinctive methods used to enhance critical thinking and all other areas is the Socratic Circle literary discussion begun in grade 9. In response to SAT data, the department has also instituted a formalized vocabulary program and more skill-building activities using content from major works to raise student performance. In the past four years, the percentage of AP students achieving a score of 3 or better on the English Literature and Composition exam has risen from 20 to over 70%.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

The fundamental purpose of the mathematics curriculum is to develop student understanding and skill in the principles and methods of mathematics and in their application to a broad range of problem-solving and decision-making situations. The department collaborates in planning strategies that emphasize the understanding of concepts, encourage discovery, stimulate the imagination, and stress a high degree of skill mastery.

The curriculum is designed to take into consideration individual differences in experience, knowledge, and skill. Western's math program fosters active participation of all students; the curriculum is functional and designed to meet the present and possible future needs of all students on college campuses, in their careers, or in daily experience. While working to promote mastery of the content of each course, instructors guide students to develop an appreciation of the important role mathematics plays in today's society.

The department offers a broad range of courses with varying levels of difficulty, from Algebra I to AP Calculus BC. Both standard and honors level courses are available, and students are encouraged to take the course that will challenge them and strengthen their skills. At Western all students are required to take a math course each year. Some have the opportunity to take both Algebra II and Geometry in their sophomore year so that they can enroll in AP Calculus AB or BC their senior year. This year students could elect to take Logic and Robotics, two one-semester elective courses, and next year students may take AP Statistics.

Two Math teachers sponsor the school's Robotics Club which has competed in state and national competitions and received numerous awards. Every teacher in their department offers coach class for his/her students to help them achieve proficiency as they move through the program.

4. Instructional Methods:

Because the faculty engages—whether within or across disciplines—in collaborative curriculum writing, shares best practices, and works to locate and create work and assessments appropriate to stimulating and monitoring student growth, the learning experience at Western has undergone some changes. While lecture has its place occasionally in order to strengthen listening and note-taking skills (teachers begin introducing the Cornell System in grade 9), it is not the norm. Teachers now use a number of strategies to engage students so they learn not merely content, but how to learn. Horizontal teams meet to determine which study skills, content, and concepts can be introduced, reviewed, and practiced at each grade level.

Incorporating explicit teaching when necessary, teachers depend more heavily on modeling followed by individual practice and application. Beginning in grade 9, students receive training in the SQ3R [survey/question/read/recite/review] method of responding to and learning from non-fiction work, including primary source documents and textbooks. Additionally, instructors stress both vocabulary and writing skills across the curriculum wherever appropriate.

Vertical Teams, with the backwards mapping that guides curricular offerings, begin incorporating approaches often used in Pre-AP and Pre-IB. These help students prepare for advanced studies at Western and in college. Methods like SOAPSTones (which can be used in both Social Studies and English) help students delve into primary and secondary source texts. Students practice methods of graphic organizing so they can better examine, understand and utilize course content. Teachers use LCD and overhead projectors to enhance delivery. Students are taken to computer labs or the library for research, writing, or skill development experiences. Small and large group projects (with delineated process descriptions and expectations) stimulate collaborative learning. Students create panel presentations, take part in seminar discussion, and participate in Socratic Circles designed to foster critical thinking and analysis. Oftentimes, these activities are tied to later writing or other kinds of assessment. Students are expected to be able to answer the "Big So What?" whenever dealing with course content—not just what, but how and why it is significant.

5. Professional Development:

Baltimore City has a number of staff development days built into the school year calendar. Increasingly, however, individual disciplines and schools are allowed to set the agenda for this time. Western's staff may remain in-house: attending sessions in the use of technology in the classroom; grade-level team meetings to discuss student progress and challenges; AP meetings where instructors share program and methods; peer

sharing of best practices; sessions focusing on female adolescent development in relation to learning; departmental vertical team planning; and subject team planning.

Teachers and staff participate in district and outside professional development. College Board workshops and institutes have helped our teachers to achieve academic rigor in the classroom, deal with varied learning styles, write curriculum, prepare students for Advanced Placement, and foster gifted and talented education in their classrooms. Some of Western's instructors have also attended NEH seminars and institutes related to their content areas. They share what they have learned with their colleagues so that students may benefit from their experiences. Even faculty meetings devote a significant portion of time to sharing and discussion of best practices.

Western's Instructional Leadership Team plays a pivotal role in planning professional development and alerting teachers to opportunities for honing their craft. In all of these activities Western's staff focuses on using challenging content to develop essential skills and critical thinking.

6. School Leadership:

Western is a learning community. An atmosphere of mutual respect rests on acknowledgement and employment of the insights, talents, and abilities of others in the service of educating our girls.

The principal, chief educator as well as manager, relies on input and collaboration from the assistant principals, all of whom are grade-level administrators who follow their classes through their high school years, monitoring each student's academic progress and personal growth. Each also supports specific disciplines, working with department heads and members to foster teaming efforts, data review and collaborative planning. One administrator works with special-needs students to ensure provision of proper instruction and support.

In scheduling, the administration makes a priority of affording common planning time to subject area teams. Administrators, including a business manager, also support department and individual teacher requests for materials and/or professional development. The administration encourages teachers to attend AP training during the school year and/or summer, and provides them financial support.

The School Improvement Team includes administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents, and community members. It meets monthly to make sure that development and implementation of school philosophy, curriculum, and policy meet the needs of students and help create a safe and comfortable atmosphere conducive to learning.

The Instructional Leadership Team, comprised of administrators, department heads, and other key personnel, serves as the primary conduit for communication between faculty/staff and the school leadership. Through the Team, school leaders learn of staff concerns, successes, and proposals, and the staff is informed of school policies and developing issues.

Department heads (content and learning strategy leaders) foster vertical and horizontal teaming and curriculum development. With department members they ensure courses are aligned with standards for advanced college preparatory work. Department heads also make certain—as the budget allows—that their teachers have the instructional materials and professional development opportunities needed to improve student performance.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 10 Test: High School Assessment: Algebra/Data Analysis, 2006-present/Maryland School Assessment: Geometry, 2003-2005

Edition/Publication Year: Annual Publisher: Maryland State Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	99	65	75	59	38
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	169	227	204	230	233
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient	99	63	75	60	34
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	128	112	107	102	106
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African-American					
Proficient	99	64	75	56	34
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	152	184	175	197	189
3. (specify subgroup): White (not of Hispanic origin)					
Proficient	100	74	69	68	59
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	15	34	26	25	41
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Information on these tests and scores are reported at <http://mdreportcard.org/>. The Maryland State Department of Education reports only "percent proficient" on these tests, which are given as end-of-course assessments.

Subject: Reading Grade: 10 Test: High School Assessment English 2 (2004-present) /Maryland School Assessment: Grade 10 Reading (2003-04)

Edition/Publication Year: Annual Publisher: Maryland State Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	99	90	85	86	76
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	174	193	183	229	237
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient	99	87	91	81	80
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	86	95	96	100	85
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African-American					
Proficient	99	89	86	87	75
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	157	169	157	195	190
3. (specify subgroup): White (not of Hispanic origin)					
Proficient	100	100	83	85	88
% Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	15	21	18	26	43
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Information on these tests and scores are reported at <http://mdreportcard.org/>. The Maryland State Department of Education reports only "percent proficient" on these tests, which are given as end-of-course assessments.

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